



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Bureau of Labor Statistics

Proposed collection, comment request

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a pre-clearance consultation program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA95) [44 U.S.C. 3506(c) (2)(A)]. This program helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is soliciting comments concerning the proposed revision of the "The Consumer Expenditure Surveys: The Quarterly Interview and the Diary." A copy of the proposed information collection request (ICR) can be obtained by contacting the individual listed below in the Addresses section of this notice.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted to the office listed in the Addresses section of this notice on or before *(insert date 60 days after date of publication in the Federal Register)*.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Nora Kincaid, BLS Clearance Officer, Division of Management Systems, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Room 4080, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20212. Written comments also may be transmitted by fax to 202-691-5111 (this is not a toll free number).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nora Kincaid, BLS Clearance Officer, at 202-691-7628 (this is not a toll free number). (See Addresses section.)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The Consumer Expenditure (CE) Surveys collect data on consumer expenditures, demographic information, and related data needed by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and other public and private data users. The continuing surveys provide a constant measurement of changes in consumer expenditure patterns for economic analysis and to obtain data for future CPI revisions. The CE Surveys have been ongoing since 1979.

The data from the CE Surveys are used 1) for CPI revisions, 2) to provide a continuous flow of data on income and expenditure patterns for use in economic analysis and policy formulation, and 3) to provide a flexible consumer survey vehicle that is available for use by other Federal Government agencies. Public

and private users of price statistics, including Congress and the economic policymaking agencies of the Executive branch, rely on data collected in the CPI in their day-to-day activities. Hence, data users and policymakers widely accept the need to improve the process used for revising the CPI. If the CE Surveys were not conducted on a continuing basis, current information necessary for more timely, as well as more accurate, updating of the CPI would not be available. In addition, data would not be available to respond to the continuing demand from the public and private sectors for current information on consumer spending.

In the Quarterly Interview Survey, each consumer unit (CU) in the sample is interviewed every three months over four calendar quarters. The sample for each quarter is divided into three panels, with CUs being interviewed every three months in the same panel of every quarter. The Quarterly Interview Survey is designed to collect data on the types of expenditures that respondents can be expected to recall for a period of three months or longer. In general the expenses reported in the Interview Survey are either relatively large, such as property, automobiles, or major appliances, or are expenses which occur on a fairly regular basis, such as rent, utility bills, or insurance premiums.

The Diary (or recordkeeping) Survey is completed at home by the respondent family for two consecutive one-week periods. The primary objective of the Diary Survey is to obtain expenditure

data on small, frequently purchased items which normally are difficult to recall over longer periods of time.

II. Current Action

Office of Management and Budget clearance is being sought for the proposed revision of the Consumer Expenditure Surveys: The Quarterly Interview and the Diary.

Every ten years the CE survey updates its sample of primary sampling units (PSUs) based on the latest decennial census in order to make sure its sample accurately reflects the latest geographic shifts in the American population. The 2015 sample design implements new geography for CE. This involves dropping PSUs, adding PSUs, and dropping and adding counties within existing PSUs.

Beginning in 2015, the first wave bounding interview of the Consumer Expenditure Quarterly Interview Survey will be phased out and a four wave survey will be implemented. All four waves will have a three month reference period and data from all waves will be used in the final, published data. The decision to eliminate the bounding interview was based on substantial research on the ineffectiveness of the bounding interview, and its negative impact on respondent burden and survey costs. Additionally, to keep the survey current and to fulfill the requirements of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), question wording of some items was simplified, some items were deleted, and other

items were added. In the Interview instrument, those change are as follows: 1) new screeners including a business expense screener that will screen out households who do not have any business expenses from the business expense questions and a detailed phone bill screener that will screen out breakout questions for TV, internet, etc., when a bill is not available; 2) questions added on Tricare and on health care exchanges; 3) questions and screeners deleted including the alcohol screener question, a question on if anything else is included in a package trip, a question on the number of trips purchased for non CU members, and questions on federal and state/local income taxes and refunds; and 4) simplified question wording.

In the 2015 Diary CAPI instrument, questions on regular grocery expenses and expenses for food from places other than a grocery store were reworded to match Interview.

A full list of the proposed changes to the Quarterly Interview Survey and Diary Survey are available upon request.

In addition, the Consumer Expenditure program is planning several tests over the next several years in an effort to improve the CE surveys in the areas of both data quality and respondent burden.

III. Desired Focus of Comments

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility.
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used.
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected.
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submissions of responses.

Type of Review: Revision, of a currently approved collection.

Agency: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Title: The Consumer Expenditure Surveys: The Quarterly Interview and the Diary.

OMB Number: 1220-0050

Affected Public: Individuals or Households

Total Response Burden for the Quarterly Interview and Diary Surveys				
CEQ- Interview 2015	CEQ- Interview (After	CED- Diary	Total (2015)	Total (After 2015)

	2015)				
Number of responses	32,895	32,447	36,895	69,790	69,342
Total burden hours	27,708	27,332	33,599	61,307	60,931

Total Burden Cost (capital/startup): \$0

Total Burden Cost (operating/maintenance): \$0

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval of the information collection request; they also will become a matter of public record.

Signed at Washington, D.C., this 27th day of June 2014.

Kimberley Hill

Chief, Division of Management Systems, Bureau of Labor
Statistics

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